



An
exclusive
interview
and private
lesson with
**Arch
Enemy's**
sinister
six-string
mastermind,
**MICHAEL
AMOTT.**

HISTORICALLY Ozzfest has done great things for a lot of bands, so it's exciting for us to be playing the second stage this year," says Arch Enemy axman and riff writer extraordinaire Michael Amott. "Even though we've toured America quite a few times and have played high-profile shows with Slayer and Iron Maiden, Ozzfest seems to reach a whole different audience. It's definitely the next level for us over here, and it's great for us to be able to put Arch Enemy in front of that many people, many of whom have probably never seen or heard us before. It couldn't be better for us really, especially in terms of timing with the new album, *Doomsday Machine*, dropping just a few days into Ozzfest."

Formed by Michael and his lead-playing sibling, Christopher, back in 1996, Arch Enemy aren't strangers to performing to large crowds due to the success they've enjoyed in Europe and, especially, Japan. "We really enjoy it," Amott affirms. "We're quite used to play-

"ANGELA IS AMAZING. SHE LOOKS GREAT, SOUNDS GREAT AND REALLY KICKS ASS ON STAGE AND ALBUM. SHE'S THE WHOLE PACKAGE."

ing to a lot of people in a festival environment. Being one of the rotating bands on Ozzfest's second stage is like a quick, short blast, because you get only 20 minutes to show what you can do. But I think we're making good use of those 20 minutes. We just get up there and do our best every day."

"We've always set out to blend extreme, really brutal, almost death metal-style stuff with classic metal and rock," says Amott. "We're a state-of-the-art extreme metal band, and the whole way we play is kind of over the top but you can definitely trace a lot of our influences back to the Seventies and Eighties. I'm a huge

fan of melody and orgasmic guitar solos over great chord progressions. Most of the music I listen to has melodic vocals, so with Arch Enemy the whole concept was to mix a lot of

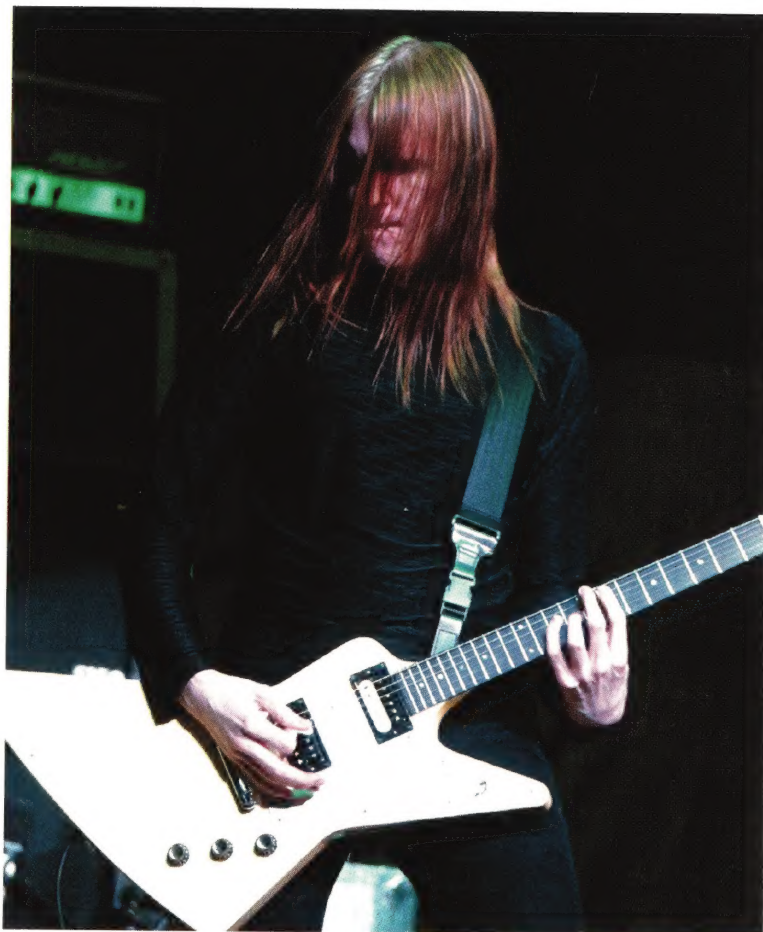
emotional guitar melody lines with aggressive vocals, write good songs within that format and make the whole sick symphony listenable! That's the challenge. I mean, if you don't have timing and melody, you've got nothing left; it's just noise really. We do believe in having some form of song structure, too, and not just doing a collage of riffs, which is basically what I feel a lot of bands are doing right now."

In addition to great songs, arrangements and chops, another thing Arch Enemy have going for them is their vocalist, Angela Gossow. She has a truly demonic voice that most male extreme metal vocalists would kill for; she also has looks that kill. "For the first few albums, we had a male singer and the main focus was on the whole guitar thing," Amott explains. "But since Angela joined in 2001, it's obviously put a whole different spin on things. Now, a lot of atten-

tion is focused on her, which is what you want in a band; you want a strong, charismatic front person. Angela is amazing. She looks great, sounds great and really kicks ass on stage and album. She's the whole package."

Doomsday Machine is Arch Enemy's sixth CD release and, according to Amott, "a bit more flamboyant than the previous one. I'm really happy with the production, the song arrangements and the performances on it. It seems to me that, especially in America, everyone is running in the same direction. We wanted to be totally different really—to have more guitar solos and tempo changes, and have the vocal delivery go completely over the top. We didn't want to have the clean-and-growly 'good cop/bad cop' vocals that all the bands seem to have now; we're just bad cop all the way! To me, often the clean vocals don't match the growling vocals, so unless you've got Rob Halford in your band I think you should just stick with what you know. Our 'good cop' is the melodic guitar lines I was just talking about."

Unfortunately, after the *Doomsday Machine* was finished, Michael's brother and highly accomplished shredder, Christopher, decided to take a leave of absence from the band so he could pursue his academic studies. "It was obviously a bit of a shock," says Amott. "It always is when someone says, 'I don't want to do this right now,' especially



All examples: Tune down two whole steps (low to high: C F B \flat E \flat G C).

All notes and chords sound two whole steps lower than written.

FIGURE 1 "Nemesis" intro riff (0:00)

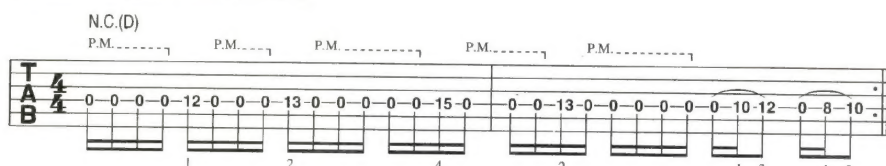


FIGURE 2 "Hybrids of Steel" main riff (0:22)

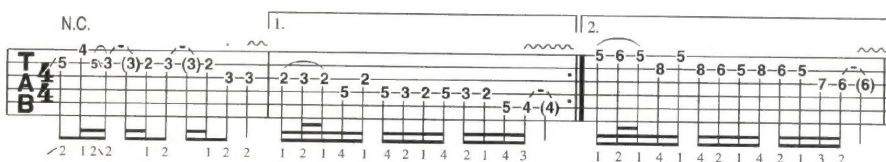
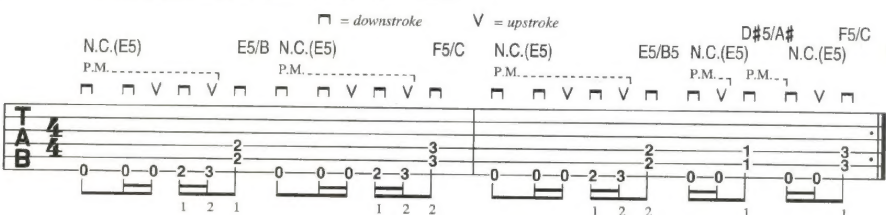


FIGURE 3 "Dead Eyes See No Future" intro riff (0:00)



when we were all so happy with the new album. It's not the well-publicized Sepultura thing where two brothers have a dramatic breakup though; it was totally amicable, and hopefully he'll back. In the meantime we're moving forward, and we managed to find a touring replacement really quickly

in Gus G. [*Firewind*, *Nightrage*]. He's a world-class player and is doing a great job for us."

The song from *Anthems of Rebellion* that really helped break Arch Enemy in the U.S. was "We Will Rise," a midtempo, anthemic cut. The first song to be unleashed from *Doomsday Machine*, however, is a completely different and much faster beast entitled "Nemesis." **FIGURE 1** is its breakneck speed intro. "We Will Rise" was a video and it opened a lot of doors for us," says Amott. "But this time around I was more excited about pushing a track that's a bit more extreme, and the label felt the same way, which was kind of a surprise, because I was expecting to have to big fight about it. I just wanted to present the more true nature of the band. Sure, we do have some midtempo songs on this record as well, but the emphasis has always really been on speed and melody. 'Nemesis' is all about that, and I think it's cool that's what people are going to hear first."

FIGURE 2 is the main riff to "Hybrids of Steel" (*Doomsday Machine*). "I've had that riff lying around for quite a while, even before the last

album, but I didn't really know where to use it." Amott says. "We played around with it a little bit in rehearsal, but it was hard to fit in to a song. I guess that's why it's ended up in an instrumental. Don't ask me what scale I'm using, because I don't know much theory. It's just a homemade thing and isn't your typical scale. It's Middle Eastern or something, I suppose."

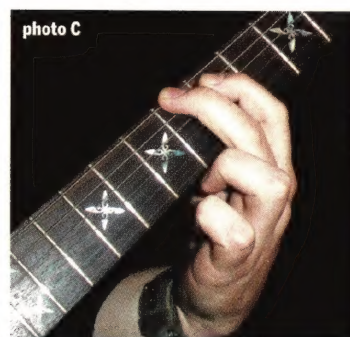
FIGURE 3 is the intro to "Dead Eyes Have No Future" (*Anthems of Rebellion*) and features inverted power chords. "I like those shapes," says Amott. "They sound cool, and when you hear them you can tell they're not

normal power chords. They're used a lot in classic rock riffs and old metal, and they're a Ritchie Blackmore trait, too. That's probably where it comes from originally."

In **FIGURE 4** Amott shows us the "bendy sort of thing" intro to "My Apocalypse" (*Doomsday Machine*), which he plays in true metal style, using downstrokes only. He also uses more than one finger to do the downward A string bend (**PHOTO A**) "I do that a lot just to get more strength and control in those situations." As for the origin of the Bb (b5) (**PHOTO B**) and Bb (b5) diads in the final bar: "I don't know," Amott says, with a grin. "When I write riffs, I try everything. I just let my fingers do whatever they want. It's kind of random, really. I just try and come up with interesting things like Dave Mustaine did, because some of his voicings and riffing are really different. I'm quite inspired by thinking outside the box like that."

The final two riffs Michael shows us from *Doomsday Machine* are also both great examples of Amott unashamedly wearing his influences on his sleeve. First up is **FIGURE 5**, the "doom riff" from "Mechanic God Creation"—a Black Sabbath-inspired riff if ever there was one. "Like everybody else, I've always been a huge Sabbath fan," Amott confesses. "I also grew up listening to bands who were Sabbath influenced, like Trouble and Candlemass, so I've always liked those single-string-type doom riffs."

Last but not least is **FIGURE 6**, the devil horn-inducing intro riff to "Slaves of Yesterday" that nods toward Carcass, a band Amott performed in back in the early Nineties. "I was just a fan, basically. I got to know them, and when I got the opportunity to join, I grabbed it with both hands," he recalls. "I learnt a lot from playing with them. They had such a different way of approaching riffs that they completely opened my mind to what you could do. I was a lot more of traditionalist at that time, but they were coming up with this really weird stuff, and I guess that's just stuck with me—that there are no rules and you can basically do anything." Like the five-note chromatic runs at the start of **FIGURE 6**, for instance? "I'm always trying to come up with something a little bit different like that," he says, "because a lot of extreme metal bands sound like they're playing the same song over and over again." ■



MICHAEL AMOTT'S GEAR FOR OZZFEST 2005

Guitar: ESP Signature Series Ninja Flying V
Pickups: Seymour Duncan '59 (SH-1, neck) & JB (SH-4, bridge)
Strings: D'Addario (low to high, .059, .044, .032, .018 (plain), .014, .011)
Backline: Krank Revolution head and two 4x12 cabinets
Pedals: Vox Wah; Hush (the Pedal); Boss DD-6 Digital Delay; Boss TU-2 Chromatic Tuner
***Note:** This is a scaled-down version of his usual rig

FIGURE 4 "My Apocalypse" intro riff (0:00)

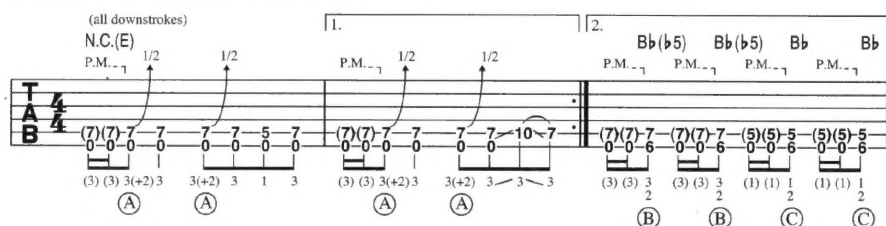


FIGURE 5 "Mechanic God Creation" "doom riff" (3:37)

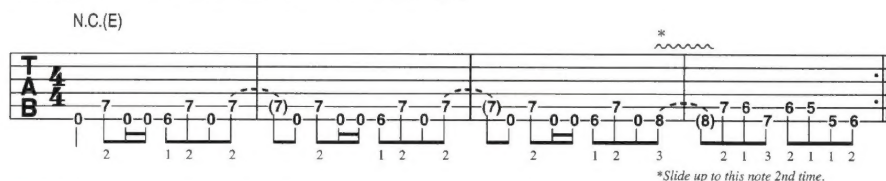


FIGURE 6 "Slaves of Yesterday" intro riff (0:00)

